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ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

ESL AND ELD PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

Policies and Procedures for Ontario Elementary and Secondary Schools, Kindergarten to Grade 12

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This publication is available on the Ministry of Education's website, at www.edu.gov.on.ca.

PREFACE

This document sets out policies and procedures for the development and implementation of programs and supports for English language learners in English language elementary and secondary schools in Ontario, from Kindergarten to Grade 12.

Many current Ministry of Education policies have components that pertain to English language learners. The policies described in this document supplement the provincial policies outlined in the following documents, which are available on the ministry website, at www.edu.gov.on.ca:

- all current elementary and secondary curriculum policy documents, including *The Ontario Curriculum, Grades 9–12: English as a Second Language and English Literacy Development* (2007)
- Policy/Program Memorandum No. 7, "Heritage Languages Program" (1990)
- *Antiracism and Ethnocultural Equity in School Boards: Guidelines for Policy Development and Implementation* (1993)
- *Violence-Free Schools Policy* (1994)
- *Guide to the Provincial Report Card, Grades 1–8* (1998)
- *Choices Into Action: Guidance and Career Education Program Policy for Ontario Elementary and Secondary Schools* (1999)
- *Ontario Secondary Schools, Grades 9 to 12: Program and Diploma Requirements* (1999)
- *Guide to the Provincial Report Card, Grades 9–12* (1999)
- *The Ontario Curriculum, Grades 9–12: Program Planning and Assessment* (2000)
- *Individual Education Plans: Standards for Development, Program Planning, and Implementation* (2000)
- *The Ontario Curriculum, Grades 1–8: English as a Second Language and English Literacy Development – A Resource Guide* (2001)
- *Ontario Schools Code of Conduct* (2001)
- *Special Education: A Guide for Educators* (2001)
- *Transition Planning: A Resource Guide* (2002)

- *Politique d'aménagement linguistique de l'Ontario pour l'éducation en langue française* (2004)
- *Many Roots, Many Voices: Supporting English Language Learners in Every Classroom. A Practical Guide for Ontario Educators* (2005)
- *Planning Entry to School: A Resource Guide* (2005)
- *Ontario Parent Involvement Policy* (2005)
- *Ontario First Nation, Métis, and Inuit Education Policy Framework* (2007)
- *New Teacher Induction Program: Manual for Performance Appraisal of New Teachers* (2006)

A number of ministry-initiated reports also contain information relating to English language learners. This supplementary material, also available on the ministry website, includes the following documents:

- *Think Literacy Success, Grades 7–12: The Report of the Expert Panel on Students at Risk in Ontario* (2003)
- *Early Reading Strategy: The Report of the Expert Panel on Early Reading in Ontario* (2003)
- *Early Math Strategy: The Report of the Expert Panel on Early Math in Ontario* (2003)
- *A Successful Pathway for All Students: Final Report of the At-risk Working Group* (January 2003)
- *Building Pathways to Success, Grades 7–12: The Report of the Program Pathways for Students at Risk Work Group* (November 2003)
- *Strengthening Education in Rural and Northern Ontario: Report on Rural Education Strategy* (August 2003)
- *Teaching and Learning Mathematics: The Report of the Expert Panel on Mathematics in Grades 4 to 6 in Ontario* (2004)
- *Literacy for Learning: The Report of the Expert Panel on Literacy in Grades 4 to 6 in Ontario* (2004)
- *Leading Math Success – Mathematical Literacy, Grades 7-12: The Report of the Expert Panel on Student Success in Ontario* (June 2004)
- *Education for All: The Report of the Expert Panel on Literacy and Numeracy Instruction for Students With Special Education Needs, Kindergarten to Grade 6* (2005)
- *Early School Leavers: Understanding the Lived Reality of Student Disengagement from Secondary School* (2005)
- *Shaping Safer Schools: A Bullying Prevention Action Plan* (2005)
- *Safe Schools Policy and Practice: An Agenda for Action* (2006)

PART 1

Framework for the K–12 Policy for English Language Learners and ESL and ELD Programs and Services

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The diversity that exists in Ontario's classrooms has helped to shape the policy outlined in this document, which is intended to promote good outcomes for English language learners. These students need to learn the language of instruction in English language schools at the same time as they are working towards meeting the curriculum expectations. Implementation of this policy will promote academic achievement among English language learners at the level expected of all learners in Ontario. It will also support successful outcomes for English language learners as they graduate from school and move to the next stage of living and learning.

This language-acquisition policy is designed to help all English language learners in the province by engaging them in learning that enables them to develop their talents, meet their goals, and acquire the knowledge and skills they will need to achieve personal success and to participate in and contribute to Ontario society.

The Ministry of Education is committed to continuing to work collaboratively with community partners and other Ontario ministries to enhance opportunities for success in school among English language learners.

The policy outlined in this document, supported by a variety of resources, will increase the education system's capacity to address the learning needs of English language learners in all of Ontario's English language schools.

1.2 DEFINITION OF *ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS*

For the purposes of this policy, *English language learners* are students in provincially funded English language schools whose first language is a language other than English, or is a variety of English[1] that is significantly different from the variety used for instruction in Ontario's schools, and who may require focused educational supports to assist them in attaining proficiency in English.

These students may be Canadian born or recently arrived from other countries. They come from diverse backgrounds and school experiences, and have a wide variety of strengths and needs.

1.2.1 Canadian-born English Language Learners

Many English language learners were born in Canada and raised in families or communities in which languages other than English are spoken. They may include, for example:

- Aboriginal students whose first language is a language other than English;[2]

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1. English is an international language, and many varieties of English – sometimes referred to as dialects – are spoken around the world. Standard English is the variety of English that is used as the language of education, law, and government in English-speaking countries. Some varieties of English are very different – not only in pronunciation or accent but also in vocabulary and sentence structure – from the English required for success in Ontario schools. Some varieties are so different from standard English that many linguists consider them to be languages in their own right.

2. The Ministry of Education is dedicated to excellence in public education for all students, including First Nation, Métis, and Inuit students. The document *Ontario First Nation, Métis, and Inuit Education Policy Framework, 2007* provides the strategic policy context within which the Ministry of Education, school boards, and schools will work together to improve the academic achievement of First Nation, Métis, and Inuit students. The framework has two components: targeted strategies and supports for First Nation, Métis, and Inuit students; and strategies to increase knowledge and awareness of Aboriginal histories, cultures, and perspectives among all students, teachers, and school board staff. In order to achieve these goals, a holistic approach integrating the framework strategies throughout all programs, services, and initiatives is necessary.

- children who were born in communities that have maintained a distinct cultural and linguistic tradition, who have a first language that is not English, and who attend English language schools;[3] and
- children who were born in immigrant communities in which languages other than English are primarily spoken.

1.2.2 Newcomers From Other Countries

Newcomers[4] arrive from countries around the world at various stages in their educational careers. They may arrive in their pre-school years or at any point between Kindergarten and Grade 12. They may arrive at the beginning of the school year or at any time during the school year. Depending on their age and country of origin, they may have had varying educational experiences prior to their arrival in Canada, and consequently will require different levels of support in order to succeed in the classroom. Newcomers from other countries may include:

- children who have arrived in Canada with their families as part of a voluntary, planned immigration process. If they are of school age, they have most often received formal education in their home countries, and some may have studied English as a foreign language. However, some of these students may have had limited or inconsistent access to schooling;
- children who have arrived in Canada as a result of a war or other crisis in their home country, and who may have left their homeland under conditions of extreme urgency. These children have often suffered traumatic experiences, and may also be separated from family members. They may have been in transit for a number of years, or may not have had access to formal education in their home country or while in transit;
- international or "visa" students who have paid fees to attend school in Ontario and often plan to attend a Canadian university. Most visa

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3. Section 23 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms defines the right of Canadian citizens of the English-speaking or French-speaking minority of a province to educate their children in that minority language, wherever numbers warrant. In Ontario, francophone children who come within the defined classes, and who are otherwise qualified to be resident pupils, have the right to be educated in French language schools at both the elementary and secondary levels. For more detailed information, please refer to *Aménagement linguistique – A Policy for Ontario's French-Language Schools and Francophone Community* (2004).
4. Children of parents who do not meet Section 23 criteria can be admitted to Ontario's French language schools by an admissions committee. Though they may be from any background, they are often the children of parents who have settled in Canada as immigrants or refugees, and for whom French is their first, second, or even third language, yet who feel a certain attachment to French. They often come from countries where the language of public administration or schooling is French.

students are of secondary school age. These students typically arrive in Canada without their families, and may live with extended family, a host family, or alone. Because they often represent the aspirations of their families, and because of the expense involved in sending them to study in Canada, these students are often under great pressure to do well and progress through school as quickly as possible. Some have had instruction in English but may still have considerable difficulty learning English in Ontario classrooms.

1.3 THE GOALS OF THE POLICY

The implementation of this policy will result in a consistent approach to the education of English language learners across the province, while also affording the flexibility school boards need to meet their local needs, build capacity, and enhance program viability. The goal of Ontario's policy for English language learners is to provide school boards with direction and support in meeting the needs of English language learners so that these students can develop the proficiency in English that is necessary for success in school. The policy will assist school boards in meeting these needs by:

- providing a definition of *English language learners*;
- describing effective procedures for reception, orientation, placement, and programming for English language learners, in order to accelerate their acquisition of English for academic purposes;
- describing procedures for initial and ongoing assessment of English language learners and for reporting to parents;[5]
- clarifying procedures for the identification of English language learners who are to participate in large-scale assessments;
- defining the roles and responsibilities of teachers and administrators and providing opportunities for them to develop the skills they need to support English language learners effectively;
- clarifying procedures for collecting data related to English language learners and for monitoring and tracking their progress, to support public accountability;

5. The term *parent* is used throughout this document to refer to the legal guardian of any student under 18 years of age.

- describing procedures designed to support increased credit accumulation, graduation rates, and postsecondary enrolment among English language learners.

1.4 MINISTRY SUPPORT FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF THE POLICY

To help school boards implement this policy, the Ministry of Education will:

- continue to provide funding that is intended to be used for the benefit of English language learners;
- provide leadership on education for English language learners;
- collect student data – for example, Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO) results, data on credit accumulation and course types taken, graduation rates, and other indicators of student success – in order to track student progress and monitor the academic achievement of English language learners;
- provide assessment tools and criteria for tracking students' development of proficiency in English over time;
- use information gathered from assessments to set benchmarks for English language learners in Ontario;
- monitor and provide accountability standards for ESL and ELD programs and services;
- support school boards in developing the English language learner section of their Board Improvement Plan and Student Success/Learning to 18 Action Plan and in completing the relevant section of financial statements submitted annually to the ministry;
- provide focused support for professional development/training to help teachers work effectively with English language learners;
- support the provision of accommodations and/or modifications that some English language learners may need to achieve academic success;
- encourage faculties of education to enhance opportunities for teachers to acquire knowledge and skills related to teaching English language learners;
- research and promote effective practices for teaching English language learners; and
- integrate information about instruction for English language learners in the Ontario curriculum and related resources.

HOW TO READ PART 2 OF THIS POLICY DOCUMENT

0.0.0 **Numbered statements outline the mandated policy requirements that will be met by all school boards and schools.**

Additional recommendations may follow the policy statements, in regular type. They are provided to support the implementation of the policy requirements, and need not be regarded as mandatory.

PART 2

Components of the K–12 Policy for English Language Learners and ESL and ELD Programs and Services

2.1 BOARD PLANNING

2.1.1 As part of the Board Improvement Plan and the Student Success/Learning to 18 Action Plan, all boards will include a section that addresses the needs of English language learners.

The section of the plan that addresses the needs of English language learners should include information about the following:

- data collection that indicates the first language (L1) of English language learners, their country of origin, their date of arrival in Canada, and their date of arrival in Ontario
- the number of students identified as English language learners and their levels of English language proficiency (see Section 1.2)
- procedures for welcoming English language learners and their families (see Section 2.2)
- initial assessment of English language learners (see Section 2.3)
- placement of English language learners (see Section 2.4)
- transition planning for English language learners moving from elementary to secondary school and/or from secondary school to postsecondary destinations (see Section 2.4)

- programming for English language learners (see Section 2.5)
- ongoing assessment of progress, evaluation, and procedures for reporting to parents (see Section 2.8)
- allocation of resources provided to support English language learners (see Section 2.11)
- number of full-time equivalent (FTE) designated ESL and ELD teachers (see Section 2.12)
- professional development for both new and experienced teachers (see Section 2.12)

Boards may also want to include other components, depending on their local situations, and may already have plans and procedures in place for some or all of these components.

In developing this section of the plan, boards should:

- consult with community partners including students, staff, parents, community agencies, and local businesses that reflect the diversity of the community (including cultural groups within the board's jurisdiction);
- make connections with other ministry policies (see the Preface);
- consider the local needs of the school board and schools;
- set clear objectives with specific timelines;
- plan for in-service training for all staff;
- develop strategies for effectively communicating the policy to schools, staff, students, parents, and the community;
- initiate a process for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of the plan based on the implemented improvement strategies and evidence of student success.

This information should be shared with schools, staff, students, parents, and the community.

2.1.2 Where a board already has in place a plan for English language learners, this plan shall be reviewed to confirm that it meets the requirements set out in this document.

The ministry recognizes that such factors as geography and demographics have an impact on decisions about the use of resources. Boards are in the best position to determine how to deploy staff through the existing grant structure while meeting the requirements of this policy.

2.2 RECEPTION AND ORIENTATION OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS AND THEIR FAMILIES

2.2.1 **School boards will develop protocols to define procedures and practices for welcoming English language learners and their families and providing them with appropriate orientation to the Ontario school system, in the first language of the students and their families whenever possible. The protocol will include procedures for the admission of students in all grades, including Kindergarten – regardless of level of English proficiency or prior schooling – who arrive and need to begin school in Ontario at any time during the school year.**

2.2.1a **Parents will be made aware of the goal of ESL and ELD programs in Ontario schools and how they are of benefit to students who are developing proficiency in English.**

2.2.1b **Parents who are French speaking must be informed of their right to enrol their child in a French language school if they qualify under Section 23 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. They must also be informed that children of parents who do not meet Section 23 criteria can be admitted to Ontario's French language schools by an admissions committee if they come from countries where the language of public administration or schooling is French. For more detailed information, see *Aménagement linguistique – A Policy for Ontario's French Language Schools and Francophone Community* (2004).**

Reception and Orientation

First impressions are important, and schools should provide a warm welcome for all English language learners and their families.

Orientation programs should include: information about courses and about considerations related to course selection; explanation of programs and activities; explanation of school policies (including assessment,

evaluation, and reporting policies and homework policies); explanation of the overall school structure, including the School Council's role; and information about community activities and supports.

Effective orientation can be done in a variety of ways, including: through workshops, flyers, handbooks, web newsletters, and mentorships that connect newcomers with students already in the school system. Effective use of human resources facilitates effective orientation and may include the involvement of designated guidance counsellors, appropriate school teams, ESL and ELD teachers, classroom teachers, international language teachers, school support staff, student ambassadors, community elders, and parents or parent networks.

Partnerships between school boards and First Nation Education Authorities can be helpful in ensuring that Aboriginal students receive culturally appropriate reception and orientation services.

English language learners who are under the age of 18 and are otherwise entitled to be admitted to school in Ontario will be admitted to school whether or not their parent or guardian is unlawfully in Canada (see Policy/Program Memorandum No. 136, "Clarification of Section 49.1 of the Education Act: Education of Persons Unlawfully in Canada" [2004], for further details).

Immigrants/refugees coming from regions of instability may need additional supports to address issues related to trauma and stress.

Registration

Clear direction should be given to school staff to register all students of eligible school age, whether or not an ESL or ELD program is already in place, or to assist students to find an appropriate and accessible school placement where their needs as English language learners will be met.

Kindergarten registration procedures should take into account the need for interpreters and printed material in various languages.

2.2.1c **Protocols will address the effective use of human resources, including community resources.**

Effective use of community resources to assist in the orientation process includes the involvement of settlement agencies and community organizations, resources provided by the Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration, Citizenship and Immigration Canada, public libraries, and adult education programs in areas such as ESL, citizenship education, and parenting.

2.2.1d **Protocols will include direction for the gathering of student information.**

Clear direction should be given to school staff on the gathering of student information that will be required for monitoring purposes.

2.3 INITIAL ASSESSMENT OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

2.3.1 **School boards will assign staff to assess the English language proficiency of all English language learners. The assessment procedure will include:**

- **a structured interview to assess oral communication skills (i.e., listening and speaking);**
- **an assessment of reading comprehension;**
- **an assessment of student writing;**
- **an assessment of mathematical knowledge and skills.**

Standard English is used in schools in English-speaking countries such as Canada, the United Kingdom, Ireland, Jamaica, Australia, many African countries, and parts of India. Standard English can be spoken with many different accents (e.g., a northern Ontario accent, a Jamaican accent, an Irish accent).

In some countries, other varieties of English are used as well as standard English. Students from these countries are usually identified as English speaking when they enrol in a school. However, even though they may

identify themselves as English speakers, their understanding and production of standard English may be affected by the way English is used in their own language communities. As a result, their language learning needs are often not recognized.

An initial assessment of English language proficiency can help identify those students who, although they may be identified as English speaking, may require instruction in some of the vocabulary and grammatical forms of standard Canadian English in order to succeed in school.

Where possible, at least part of the initial assessment should be conducted in the student's first or dominant language (e.g., the language previously used for schooling) to allow a broader view of his or her linguistic development and academic background. The administration and interpretation of language assessments should be linguistically appropriate.

2.3.2 **If initial assessment indicates that an English language learner has had limited prior schooling, the board will provide additional support to the student.**

The assessment should provide information about the type and amount of support the student will need to develop English language skills and bridge gaps in learning.

Additional support should be provided through an intensive program designed to accelerate the student's acquisition of proficiency in everyday and academic English and the appropriate knowledge and skills of literacy and numeracy.

2.3.3 **School boards will develop a protocol for identifying English language learners who may also have special education needs.**

2.3.4 **If information from the student's home country, from initial assessment, or from early teacher observation indicates that the student may have special education needs, the student will be referred to the appropriate school team.**

Where special education needs have been identified, either in the initial assessment or through later assessments, students are eligible for ESL or ELD services and special education services simultaneously.

The administration and interpretation of psycho-educational assessments should be linguistically appropriate (i.e., tests should be administered in the student's dominant language or with the assistance of a bilingual educator whenever possible). As well, assessors should use more than one instrument or set of instruments in considering the learning characteristics and describing the performance of English language learners. Assessors should also take into account the student's prior opportunities for learning.

The development of an Individual Education Plan (IEP) for an English language learner needs to take into consideration both needs related to language learning and needs related to the student's exceptionality.

2.4 PLACEMENT OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

2.4.1 **School boards will consider the educational background of all English language learners in determining their placement and the number of credits that may be granted for prior learning.**

Placement decisions should be based on information from:

- interviews with students and their parents/families about previous access to schooling; experiences in school, including type of schooling; migration history and family circumstances; health; the student's strengths, hobbies, and interests; special needs and other related/potentially relevant information;

- school documents, where available (e.g., report cards, school records);
- Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR; see also Section 2.6.4) for credit-granting purposes (e.g., international language credits for first language proficiency);
- an assessment of computational/procedural skills in mathematics (as an indicator of general academic experience).

It is important to ensure that all students, including newcomers, receive information about the full range of career possibilities and that they have support in exploring various career opportunities and the educational pathways that will help them to achieve their career goals. English language learners moving from elementary to secondary schools should also have an opportunity to begin to explore secondary school options, with support from teachers and parents.

Guidance counsellors should have discussions with English language learners in secondary schools about course selection in relation to the various pathways leading to the student's postsecondary and career goals. As part of the ongoing process of developing an educational plan, teachers and guidance counsellors should help English language learners to identify their personal goals and strategies for learning English.

It is also important for teachers and guidance counsellors to schedule frequent "check-ins" with English language learners to monitor their academic achievement, participation in extracurricular activities, and social adjustment.

2.4.2 A student's level of proficiency in English will not influence the choice of grade placement.

2.4.2a In elementary schools, English language learners will be placed with an age-appropriate group.

2.4.2b **In secondary schools, placement in a grade or in specific subjects will depend upon the student's prior education, background in specific subject areas, and aspirations.**

Initial placement should be provisional, to give students opportunities to demonstrate their knowledge and skills.

In secondary school, equivalent credits for previous education, whether or not this is supported by documentation, should be awarded in accordance with policy defined in *Ontario Secondary Schools, Grades 9-12: Program and Diploma Requirements* (1999). However, secondary school placement may be independent of equivalent credits granted. For example, a student who had successfully completed the equivalent of Grade 10 in his or her home country would be granted 16 equivalent credits, but may not have the English language proficiency to successfully take Grade 11 courses exclusively.

2.4.3 **English language learners should be placed in a grade-level or subject-specific classroom for at least part of each day.**

Interaction with English-speaking peers supports the English language learner's overall adjustment to the Ontario school system. Appropriate placement encourages student engagement, provides appropriate role models, enables students to build on their existing knowledge and skills, and enhances opportunities for English language acquisition.

2.4.4 **Final decisions regarding placement are made by the principal in consultation with the student, staff, and parents. The principal will communicate the placement decision, and the rationale for the placement, to the student and parents.**

Integration into mainstream classrooms is an ongoing process. The amount of integration should increase over time as students become more proficient in English.

2.5 PROGRAMMING FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

2.5.1 School boards will implement programs and services that will enable English language learners to continue their education while learning English.

In all situations, English language learners must receive appropriate program support to enable them to participate successfully in Ontario schools. In order to provide the best possible programming for English language learners, school boards should offer program models that take into consideration the numbers and distribution of English language learners across the school board. Such program models may include:

- English as a Second Language (ESL) programs, which are for students whose first language is other than English or is a variety of English significantly different from that used for instruction in Ontario schools. Students in these programs have had educational opportunities to develop age-appropriate first-language literacy skills;
- English Literacy Development (ELD) programs, which are for students whose first language is other than English or is a variety of English significantly different from that used for instruction in Ontario schools. Students in these programs are most often from countries in which their access to education has been limited, and they have had limited opportunities to develop language and literacy skills in any language. Schooling in their countries of origin has been inconsistent, disrupted, or even completely unavailable throughout the years that these children would otherwise have been in school. As a result, they arrive in Ontario schools with significant gaps in their education;
- congregated classes for English language instruction, in the home school or other accessible school, for a significant portion of each school day;
- individual assistance on a tutorial/resource basis;
- core programs (English, social studies/history/geography, science, mathematics) taught by content-area teachers who also hold English as a Second Language Part 1 qualifications;
- sections of secondary courses designated for English language learners (e.g., Canadian geography for newcomers);

- integration into mainstream classrooms with appropriate instructional support from the classroom teacher and/or an ESL/ELD teacher;
- participation in courses that encourage a high level of student involvement but that do not require a high level of proficiency in English (e.g., music, health and physical education, international language programs in some of the community languages when possible);
- participation in elementary and secondary international language programs;
- increased opportunities to use technology in developing proficiency in English;
- online support;
- peer tutoring and/or bilingual tutoring;
- a combination of some or all of the above.

For more detailed information on programming, please refer to *The Ontario Curriculum, Grades 1–8: English as a Second Language and English Literacy Development – A Resource Guide* (2001), *The Ontario Curriculum, Grades 9 to 12: English as a Second Language and English Literacy Development* (2007), and the various resources that have been developed by the ministry to support English language learners.

English language learners at different stages of learning English and/or developing literacy in English will need program adaptations in order to be successful. Appropriate adaptations include:

- modified expectations (e.g., modification of some or all of the course expectations, especially for students in the early stages of learning English or those who require ELD support). (Note: When learning expectations are modified, this must be clearly indicated on the student's report card.);
- a variety of accommodations related to instructional strategies (e.g., extensive use of visual cues, graphic organizers, peer tutoring; strategic use of students' first languages);
- a variety of learning resources (e.g., use of visual materials, simplified texts, and bilingual dictionaries);
- accommodations related to assessment strategies (see Section 2.8 for more details).

2.5.2 **School boards will designate appropriately qualified personnel to coordinate programs and provide leadership at the system level.**

Board staff who coordinate ESL and ELD programs and services should hold specialist qualifications in English as a Second Language.

When making staffing decisions, school boards should consider the number of English language learners in the board, and, in individual schools, the number who will require ESL or ELD programs and services. (See Ontario Regulation 184/97.)

2.5.3 **School boards will design programs and services for English language learners so that they are flexible in response to changing needs and reflective of the needs of the students.**

The length of time that it will take for an English language learner to develop the level of proficiency in English that supports academic success will vary. Most English language learners are able to function effectively and confidently in everyday language situations within a year or two. For example, they can follow classroom directions and maintain simple conversations about familiar topics and routines. However, it will take longer for English language learners to catch up to their age peers in academic language.

Boards should design and implement their programs and services to align with the needs of the English language learners in their schools. Consultation with community partners will assist boards in making informed decisions about ESL and ELD programming and services.

2.6 GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

2.6.1 **A student entering the Ontario secondary school system at any grade level may count a maximum of 3 ESL or ELD credits as compulsory English credits. (Four compulsory English credits are required for graduation.)**

2.6.2 **The remaining compulsory English credit(s) will be earned at the Grade 12 level. This course may be offered in special sections for English language learners.**

Schools may supplement the ESL and ELD courses by providing sections for English language learners in other subjects (e.g., a class in Canadian history that is adapted for English language learners in which students earn a Canadian and world studies credit). Such classes provide additional language practice while helping students acquire knowledge and skills in the subject area and accumulate compulsory and/or optional credits.

2.6.3 **The Ontario Secondary School Literacy Course (OSSLC) is a full-credit course that fulfils the Literacy requirement for graduation and can be counted as the compulsory English credit in either Grade 11 or Grade 12. This course may be offered in special sections for English language learners.**

All students, including English language learners, must successfully complete the Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test (OSSLT) or the Ontario Secondary School Literacy Course.

Learning expectations in the OSSLC may not be modified unless the English language learner has special education needs.

The OSSLC, although it can be used to fulfil the compulsory English requirement for either Grade 11 or Grade 12, may not be accepted as the Grade 12 English entrance requirement for university or college programs. English language learners should be provided with support in planning their transition to postsecondary institutions or the workplace.

Offering courses (including the OSSLC and Grade 12 English courses) in a special section for English language learners will enable teachers to provide specific accommodations that will support English language learners as they work to meet secondary school diploma requirements.

2.6.4 **Boards will implement a process for evaluating a student's proficiency in an international language(s) and providing appropriate credit(s) for that proficiency (see Section 2.4.1), where courses in the language already exist in the board.**

Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) is the formal evaluation and credit-granting process whereby students may obtain credits for prior learning. Prior learning includes the knowledge and skills that students have acquired, in both formal and informal ways, outside secondary school. Through the process of challenging for credit, students may have their knowledge and skills evaluated against the expectations outlined for any of the Level 1–4 international language courses in the provincial curriculum policy documents in order to earn credit(s) towards the secondary school diploma.

A board is not obliged to provide opportunities for students to challenge for credit for courses that are not actually taught in schools operated by the board. Such a board may make arrangements with other boards to provide opportunities for eligible students to challenge for credit for courses that are not offered by the board.

For more detailed information on graduation requirements, refer to *Ontario Secondary Schools, Grades 9–12: Program and Diploma Requirements* (1999) and Policy/Program Memorandum No. 129, "Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR): Implementation in Ontario Secondary Schools", 2001.

2.7 SUBSTITUTIONS FOR COMPULSORY COURSES

2.7.1 **The principal has the discretion to make substitutions for a maximum of 3 compulsory courses at the secondary level to address the specific needs of English language learners.**

Substitutions should be made to promote and enhance student learning, to meet special needs, or to suit specific interests.

2.8 ONGOING ASSESSMENT, EVALUATION, AND REPORTING

2.8.1 **The school board will establish procedures for ensuring ongoing assessment of the development of proficiency in English and the academic progress of each English language learner. Progress will be reported to parents on a regular basis.**

The information on student achievement gathered through assessment and evaluation should be communicated to students and parents at regular intervals and in a variety of informal and formal ways, using a language that the parent is comfortable with whenever possible.

Schools should continue tracking the progress of English language learners throughout their school careers. This will ensure that supports are provided when necessary and will provide demographic information for future planning.

2.8.2 **When learning expectations are modified for English language learners, evaluation will be based on the documented modified expectations. This will be noted on the report card and explained to parents.**

Teachers will indicate, using the appropriate box on the report card, when modifications to curriculum expectations have been made to address the ESL or ELD needs of English language learners.

In completing the report card, teachers ***do not*** check the modification box to indicate:

- that the student is participating in ESL or ELD programs or courses; or
- that accommodations have been provided (e.g., extra time to complete assignments, access to a bilingual dictionary, opportunities to work in the student's first language).

To appropriately assess and evaluate the learning of English language learners, schools may need to make some accommodations related to the assessment process. These may include:

- the granting of extra time;
- the use of alternative forms of assessment such as oral interviews, learning logs, or portfolios;
- the use of simplified language and instructions (e.g., through tasks that require completion of graphic organizers and cloze sentences).

2.8.3 **When confidential information is being discussed, the interpreter should be a bilingual teacher, a professional interpreter, or an adult member of the student's family, to facilitate accuracy of translation.**

Interaction with parents will further support parent engagement in the student's educational experiences and achievement.

2.8.4 **Information on each English language learner's level of English language acquisition will be summarized and included in the Ontario Student Record at least once in each school year.**

2.9 IDENTIFICATION AND INVOLVEMENT OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS IN LARGE-SCALE ASSESSMENTS

2.9.1 **English language learners should participate in the Grade 3 and Grade 6 provincial assessments in reading, writing, and mathematics, and in the Grade 9 provincial assessment in mathematics, when they have acquired the level of proficiency in English required for success.**

2.9.2 **Decisions about exemptions or deferrals will be made according to the requirements articulated in the EQAO administration guide.**

2.9.3 **English language learners should take the Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test when they have acquired the level of proficiency in English required for success.**

2.9.4 **English language learners should participate in national and international assessments when they have acquired the level of proficiency in English required for success.**

For more detailed information refer to the EQAO administration guides (www.eqao.com).

2.10 DISCONTINUATION OF ESL/ELD SUPPORT

2.10.1 **English language learners should receive ESL/ELD program support until they have acquired the level of proficiency required to learn effectively in English with no ESL/ELD support.**

The decision to discontinue ESL/ELD support is made by the principal in consultation with the student, the parents, and ESL/ELD and classroom teachers.

2.11 APPROPRIATE ALLOCATION OF RESOURCES TO SUPPORT ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

2.11.1 **Funding provided under the ESL/ESD component of the Language Grant is expected to be used for programs and services that are designed to benefit English language learners. Information about the use of ESL/ESD funding will be included in the financial statements submitted annually to the ministry.**

Funding provided through the Learning Opportunities Grant (LOG) takes into account the needs of immigrant children and their families.

The ESL/ESD allocation of the Language Grant and the LOG are both supplemental to the Pupil and School Foundation Grants, which are provided for all students, including English language learners. As students of school boards, English language learners are eligible for general funding from all components of the funding model.

Funding for the "recent immigrant component" of the ESL/ESD allocation of the Language Grant is based on the actual number of students who meet the immigrant criteria as identified in the annual education funding regulation. Funding for the "Pupils in Canada" component is based on census data. Both of these pieces of information are used to estimate the number of students in a school board who may require support. However, some students who generate funding may not require ESL or ELD support, whereas others who do not generate funding may require support. School boards determine the need of individual students and provide programs based on those needs.

Students born in the United States, United Kingdom, Ireland, New Zealand, and Australia do not generate ESL/ESD funding under the "immigrant component". Students born in all other countries, including English-speaking countries where the variety of English spoken is very different from the variety used in Ontario classrooms (e.g., Jamaica, India) do generate ESL/ESD funding under the "immigrant component".

Visa students must pay a fee to attend school in Ontario unless the fees are waived. Students who pay fees do not generate funding under the ESL/ESD allocation of the Language Grant or the LOG. The cost of providing services for these students must be recovered by boards through fees or other revenues.

If fees are waived, visa students generate ESL and LOG funding. They are counted as regular students.

Circumstances under which fees are waived can be found in section 49(7)(f) of the Education Act. In cases where fees are waived, non-resident visa students would be included in the enrolment count like any other student, and boards would receive the same funding as for a "Canadian" student.

2.12 ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE TEACHER QUALIFICATIONS AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

2.12.1 School boards will assign staff with the qualifications required by the Ministry of Education to teach ESL and ELD programs (see Ontario Regulation 184/97).

All teachers are responsible for supporting academic success for all students – including English language learners. Classroom/subject teachers who have students in their classes who are English language learners are not required to hold English as a Second Language Part 1 qualifications. However, the school board should provide all teachers with opportunities for professional development in meeting the needs of English language learners.

Teachers assigned to ESL and ELD programs/courses at both the elementary and secondary school level are required to hold English as a Second Language Part 1 qualifications.

Teachers with positions of added responsibility in the area of ESL and ELD (e.g., ESL/ELD department heads in secondary schools, ESL/ELD consultants and coordinators) are required to possess a Specialist Certificate in English as a Second Language.

2.12.2 School boards will provide appropriate professional development opportunities to administrators, ESL/ELD teachers, classroom teachers, and support staff to support the implementation of this policy.

English language learners are present in classrooms throughout the province. All teachers require the knowledge and skills to meet the needs of these students and effectively support their ongoing academic achievement.

Professional development opportunities related to meeting the needs of English language learners might include training in:

- making program adaptations (including accommodations related to both teaching and assessment strategies) to support English language learners;
- modifying learning expectations for English language learners;
- fostering involvement by parents and communities in the schooling of English language learners.

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